

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for controlling the rigidity of a vehicle body, the apparatus comprising which comprises:

a controller for controlling a buckling form, which controls the buckling form by adding to a member to be inputted to a collision load a lateral force in ~~the~~ a direction substantially perpendicular to the collision load ~~said member,~~

said controller comprising frame restrictors which are provided on at least one portion of said hollow member in the direction substantially perpendicular to the collision load, and which restrict deformation of said frame member in the direction substantially perpendicular to the collision load through the lateral force, and a restriction regulator which regulates a restriction state of said frame restrictors.

Claims 2-3. **(Canceled)**

4. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 or 2, ~~which also has further comprising~~ at least one collision detector, and ~~controls wherein the lateral force is controlled depending upon the~~ based on an evaluation ~~based on the output from said~~ the at least one collision detector.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein ~~said controller for controlling a buckling form~~ the lateral force generator is disposed provided within a bumper.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein ~~said~~ that at least one collision detector comprises a distance sensor that is usable with

at least one member selected from ~~distance detector~~, a speed sensor~~[[.]]~~ and a CCD camera.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein said the at least one collision detector comprises a plurality of distance sensors provided on ~~[[a]]~~ the bumper.

8. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the buckling of the side frame member occurs in ~~form is assumed to be buckling due to~~ a primary deformation mode and ~~buckling due to~~ a secondary deformation mode, and wherein a ratio of the a length L of said the side frame member to the a thickness t of said the side frame member  $L/t$  ~~["L/T"]~~ is set so that the wherein a difference between the a buckling load at during the primary deformation mode and ~~that at a buckling load~~ during the secondary deformation mode is substantially equal to a predetermined or near the maximum value.

9. **(New)** An apparatus for controlling the rigidity of a vehicle body, the apparatus comprising:

a side frame member of the vehicle body;

a lateral force generator which controls buckling of the side frame member by adding a lateral force to a collision load to be applied to an intermediate member disposed in the side frame member,

wherein the collision load is applied in a direction coinciding with a longitudinal axis of the side frame member, which is parallel to a longitudinal axis of the vehicle body, and

wherein the lateral force is added in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the side frame member; and

at least one collision detector,

wherein the lateral force is controlled based on an evaluation output from the at least one collision detector, and

wherein the at least one collision detector comprises a plurality of distance sensors provided on the bumper.

10. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the intermediate member comprises a hollow frame member, and the lateral force generator comprises a frame restrictor provided on at least one end portion of the hollow frame member and which restricts deformation of the intermediate frame member through the lateral force, and a restriction regulator which regulates the restriction state of the frame restrictor.

11. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the lateral force generator is disposed within a bumper.

12. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the at least one collision detector comprises a distance sensor that is usable with at least one member selected from a speed sensor and a CCD camera.

13. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the buckling of the side frame member occurs in a primary deformation mode and a secondary deformation mode, and wherein a ratio of a length  $L$  of the side frame member to a thickness  $t$  of the side frame member  $L/t$  is set wherein a difference between a buckling load during the primary deformation mode and a buckling load during the secondary deformation mode is substantially equal to a predetermined value.

14     **(New)** An apparatus for controlling the rigidity of a vehicle body, the apparatus comprising:

        a side frame member of the vehicle body, the side frame member having a first side frame member portion and a second side frame member portion,

        a lateral force generator which controls buckling of the side frame member by adding a lateral force to a collision load to be applied to an intermediate member disposed directly between opposing end faces of the first and second side frame members,

        wherein the collision load is applied in a direction coinciding with a longitudinal axis of the side frame member, which is parallel to a longitudinal axis of the vehicle body, and

        wherein the lateral force is added in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the side frame member.

15.     **(New)** The apparatus as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the intermediate member comprises a hollow frame member, and the lateral force generator comprises a frame restrictor provided on at least one end portion of the hollow frame member and which restricts deformation of the intermediate frame member through the lateral force, and a restriction regulator which regulates the restriction state of the frame restrictor.